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# Brigandage and Résistance in Lancastrian Normandy: A Study of the Remission Evidence \*

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The period of English conquest and occupation of Normandy (1415-50) saw a great deal of that social and economic disruption so often associated with medieval warfare. The aspect of this disruption to be investigated here is the occurrence of brigandage and of resistance to English rule. These were the two main forms which popular movements seem to have taken. There were outbreaks of open resistance, when the peasantry took up arms against the government, such as those in central Normandy in 1433-34, and in the Caux in 1435-36, as well as smaller outbreaks, such as the rising in 1424 which followed false reports of a French victory at the battle of Verneuil. Then there was the phenomenon of the 'brigands'. The nature of these armed bands, whose activities posed a major problem for the English authorities, has been the subject of some debate, centering on the question of whether they should be viewed as rebels or bandits. This is a debate which, in Allmand's words, has usually seen 'participants drawn up along national lines'.<sup>1</sup> Nineteenth-century French historians, notably Lefèvre-Pontalis, saw the brigands as patriots, 'tombés pour la France'.<sup>2</sup> Puiseux, placed the risings of the 1430s in the same context:

Nulle nation n'a plus complètement que la nôtre  
donné la démonstration de cette grande loi de  
l'humanité: c'est dans la lutte ... que la France a eu  
l'entière révélation de son nationalité.<sup>3</sup>

This type of writing was encouraged by the need to construct an heroic national history following France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-

Prussian War. In 1901, Lefèvre-Pontalis described the war as a 'duel gigantesque avec l'insatiable Angleterre, pour l'indépendance de notre sol et le maintien de notre intégrité nationale ...'.<sup>4</sup> The upshot of this line of thought is that the brigands have been viewed as patriotic guerillas continuing the struggle 'behind enemy lines', as representatives of an emerging French nationalism. More recently, historians such as Jouet have argued that the brigands' activities reveal a large degree of anti-English motivation.

The alternative view plays down the patriotic element of the brigands' activities, stressing their criminal nature, and the antipathy that often existed between them and the peasant population. The chronicler Thomas Basin recorded how the peasantry lived in fear of the brigands, who were one of the many threats to their livelihood, alongside economic problems and the impact of war and pillage. Rowe, an English historian writing in the 1930s, saw the brigands as disturbers of the peace at a time of comparative prosperity. She shows that the government of the duke of Bedford treated them as common criminals rather than political opponents.<sup>5</sup>

As well as 'patriotic' views of the brigands, there are possible economic explanations for their activities. They may be seen as peasants who were driven off their lands by hardship and by the attacks of both armies, and who tried to make from banditry the living they were unable to maintain on the land. In this view, their major motivation was self-preservation. In a Marxist framework, their actions might be seen as a rebellion against, or rejection of, their exploited role as peasants in the feudal order. The *Tuchins*, to whom they could be compared, were reported to have only attacked the rich, whom they identified by their uncalled hands.<sup>6</sup> The phenomenon of socially-subversive robber bands has been called 'social banditry' by Hobsbawm,<sup>7</sup> who argues that it offered an alternative existence for a small minority of peasants. Bandits were often accorded a hero status, and sometimes co-operated with rebel armies during revolutionary wars.<sup>8</sup>

But who exactly were the brigands? There were, broadly speaking, three groups of people who disturbed the peace of Lancastrian Normandy. The group usually referred to as *brigands* were those bandits who resorted to the forest and attacked travellers and English soldiers. These were the *brigandi* of Basin's chronicle, who caused great difficulties for the English, but who equally 'allowed no peace

for the peasants or for anyone, who caused for so long that horrible devasation of the region'.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to these brigands, there were groups of freelance soldiers who took part in pillaging. Their activities were similar in many respects to those of the brigands, and cases involving English pillagers occur in the remissions which are used as the main basis of this study, 21 of which were concerned with attacks by English soldiers on natives. This group should be distinguished from the first if we are to regard the native 'brigands' as a local peasant movement. However it is not always easy to draw such a distinction, as Wright's work on fourteenth-century evidence has shown.<sup>10</sup>

Finally there was also a difference between the brigands and the peasant rebels of 1434-36. To some extent the 'patriotic' view of the brigands relies upon playing down this difference, and placing both groups in a single category, as Jouet does when describing *résistants* in Normandy. In fact, there was often antagonism between the brigands and the settled peasant population, who did not welcome the disruption caused by brigandage. The risings of the 1430s began when the peasantry was armed by the English 'to guard and defend themselves ... against the enemy ... [and] against the brigands and English pillagers ...'<sup>11</sup>

Some, however, did support the brigands; there are many remissions for peasants who assisted them, while in one example, a *dizainier* (militia leader) actually went over to the brigands.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless we do need to remember that not all peasants supported the brigands, and that for every peasant who joined or assisted them, many more probably wanted no more than to be allowed to till the land in peace.

## The evidence

There are a number of sources which are useful in the study of resistance. The evidence of chronicles such as those of Thomas Basin and Pierre Cochon is useful in providing us with a time framework into which to fit the activities of the brigands and rebels, in describing their activities and giving us an idea of the attitudes of contemporaries towards them. We do, however, have to be aware of the problems of their subjectivity.<sup>13</sup>

Of more use to a detailed study are the contemporary official government sources. Records of executions have been used for this

purpose, notably by Jouet in his study of resistance in Lower Normandy<sup>14</sup> and by Gourlay in a similar study relating to Upper Normandy in the later years of the occupation.<sup>15</sup> These records are useful but also have their limitations. They tell us the name of the brigand concerned, the place and method of execution, and the victim's place of origin. They do not reveal, however, the circumstances or motives behind their crimes. or the age or occupation of the person executed.

Some of these gaps can be filled using remission evidence. The principal primary source used in this article is the collection edited by Le Cacheux in 1907 of the remissions (concerning Normandy).issued by the English government in Paris.<sup>16</sup> This edition covers remissions from the years 1423 to 1435. These were issued by the government to petitioners seeking pardons for crimes that they or members of their family had committed. They are particularly interesting for the light they throw upon the circumstances surrounding individual crimes, and can also help give us a flavour of the nature of the society with which they were concerned. In each remission the version of events as told by the petitioner is set forth, so that we have a valuable, albeit one-sided, account of the types of offence committed. It is also common for the remission to include the occupation and age of the petitioner. They can also tell us about others who did not seek remission, but who are mentioned by the petitioner. For example, those involved in a brigand action with the petitioner, or people who had attacked the petitioner.<sup>17</sup>

Le Cacheux included 246 remissions. Of these, 49 concern overt brigandage. This is not to say that all these were for actual brigands; in this category have been included all those who assisted the brigands, voluntarily or otherwise. These are remissions where the term '*brigand*' is specifically used. As will be explained, however, there are great problems surrounding the definition of a brigand, so this figure should be viewed as an approximation. A further 76 remissions concern people who may be seen as acting against the English - by attacking individual Englishmen, by helping the French armies, or by fleeing English-controlled territory. Again, it must be stressed that these were not all necessarily acting out of patriotism, especially the last group, who might have fled to escape the war, and who by returning to seek a remission were in effect accepting English authority. However, these figures can give us a rough idea of the extent to which brigandage and anti-English activity were of concern to the authorities. The large number of remissions for non-political crimes remind us that this was

a society where the violent settling of disputes was commonplace. Fights between natives and English soldiers may prove, on closer inspection, to have no obvious political or racial motive. For example, one remission concerns two Englishmen who had attacked a goldsmith in an argument over a ring that he claimed they had stolen from him.<sup>18</sup> In this and in similar remissions no political motive is mentioned.

The very nature of the remissions, however, means that they must be handled with care as evidence. They gave the version of events as told by the petitioner, so might be deliberately misleading about the motive behind a crime, as the petitioner tried to present him- or herself in the best light. Political motives may have been disguised as personal disputes, as the person seeking the remission may not have wanted to give the English reason to doubt his or her loyalty. The mysterious brigands could sometimes be blamed for murders in cases which sound suspiciously like attempts to cover up a murder committed by the petitioner, as in the case cited by Jouet of a man who failed to report the killing of two women by the brigands.<sup>19</sup> The brigands could be convenient scapegoats. Some murderers tried to mitigate their actions by claiming their victim was a brigand<sup>20</sup> while many who helped the brigands claimed to have been coerced.<sup>21</sup>

The overall picture given by the evidence of the remissions should also be treated with care, as the policy behind the issuing of remissions could distort the sample. The remissions that were recorded are successful ones. More serious crimes leading to executions would not appear in the sample. A lenient government might be more likely to grant remissions than a harsh one, and a strong government might be more willing to grant remissions than a weak one, because it felt fairly secure. On the other hand, of course, a large number of remissions may indicate a weak government trying to buy support, although this does not seem to be the case in this study. The English government which issued these remissions was in a fairly secure position for much of this period, due to its military success. For example, after the battle of Verneuil, the government was in a strong position and granted remissions to many who had joined the rising against the English at the time of the battle. Hence the townspeople of Verneuil were granted a remission on the very morrow of the battle for their part in the rising, the remission being 'Donné en notre ost devant Verneuil'.<sup>22</sup> The authority of the English government was indisputable - for the time being - after this victory. We can find numerous

examples of people who returned to English obedience in this period. Seven remissions issued between the battle of Verneuil (18 August) and the end of the year 1424 relate to people who had been in the French army, or in Valois-controlled territory, and who had now returned to seek mercy.<sup>23</sup> The large number of remissions issued in 1424 (37 relating to brigandage or resistance to the English) reflects not only the outbreak of violence against the English at the time of the battle of Verneuil, but also the security which that victory gave to the government of Bedford. The fortunes of war affected the likelihood of people to seek remissions, as is shown by the case of Perrot Amiot.<sup>24</sup> He joined the French armies after they had captured Louviers in 1429, but sought and obtained a remission from the English besieging that same town in July 1431. His example may be typical of the many who tried to survive in uncertain times by attempting to appear loyal to whichever king had the upper hand.

Finally, two more caveats must be mentioned. One is the time lag whereby the year of the remission is not necessarily the year when the action in question was committed, so that, for example, a man who helped the French to enter Sées in 1421 returned to seek a remission six years later. This must be borne in mind especially for crimes such as these, that occurred before the series of remissions began in January 1423. The second is to be aware that the people who gained remissions were more likely to be from the rank and file than from the leadership of rebel or brigand groups. The leaders were more likely to face execution, as the government could not risk allowing them to go free and resume their activities.

## Chronology

This study concentrates more on the social origins of the resisters and their motivation (where this can be inferred from the remissions) than on the geography or chronology of brigandage and resistance. The remissions are particularly useful in giving the occupation of the person involved, and in giving us some idea as to possible motives, so these areas are worth concentrating on. The geographical spread could be worked out from the remissions, but there is not really room in this study to go into great detail on this aspect, which has already been studied by Jouet and Goulay. A brief chronology based upon the remission evidence, and on the list of executions in Lower Normandy collected by Jouet.<sup>25</sup> will however, be mapped out. These have been



grouped by year in Figure 1. They provide a very rough idea of the incidence of brigandage and resistance.

The large number of remissions from 1424 is striking. As we have seen, this reflects both the number of attacks on the English at the time of Verneuil and the conciliatory policies that Bedford could afford to implement in its wake. The relatively high level of remissions in the years following 1424 could also reflect policy, as people returned to, or accepted, English rule. However, the execution figures show that the risings in 1424 were treated as a serious threat by the authorities. This year is the highest point for both sets of figures. The government's concern was shown by its actions to deal with the problem. Measures to repress the brigands were included as ordinances in December 1423 and January 1424.<sup>26</sup> The problem did not end with the victory at Verneuil; in September 1426, new measures were taken to protect the roads against the brigands, following a complaint to the *Grand Conseil* in Paris.<sup>27</sup> It is possible that the incidence of brigandage after 1424 was due to more people turning to brigand-like methods to resist the English, as it was harder to do so openly; Basin claimed that after the battle of Verneuil, many became brigands 'either out of cowardice or out of hatred of the English'.<sup>28</sup>

The execution records show another high point in 1436. This was the year in which the great peasant rising in the Caux was defeated, which no doubt accounts for the large number of executions. As Jouet's study only covers Lower Normandy, these figures probably under-estimate the actual level of resistance, which was centred on Upper Normandy. In the devastation following the rebellion, both brigands and pillagers from the armies seem to have thrived; Basin wrote that soldiers 'got into the habit ... of pillaging and exploiting, in disguise, the users of the public roads'.<sup>29</sup> In response to this, 'numerous brigands and highwaymen laid ambushes for the English and killed them without pity'.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, Goulay shows that the Caux was not a major centre of brigand activity after this time, perhaps because English repression was effective, or because the presence of armies (the French army captured some important towns during the rebellion) limited the scope for brigandage.

We can therefore suggest a broad outline for the history or brigandage and resistance in this period. The large numbers of executions in 1419-20 suggest a high level of resistance associated with the English conquest, when Henry V's new subjects were expected to take an oath of loyalty to him, and the brigandage reported

by Basin at the beginning of the 1420s associated with the difficult economic situation. Resistance flared up around the time of the battle of Verneuil, and is reflected in both the remission and execution records. There is quite a high level of executions in 1429-30, associated perhaps with improving French fortunes in the war after the siege of Orléans. After this, there seems to be a period of relative calm before the revolts of the mid 1430s.

### The social origins of brigands and resistants

Were the brigands, and those who came into conflict with English rule, representatives of genuinely popular movements? Puiseux argued that the impetus for the rebellions against English rule came from the lower classes.<sup>31</sup> A Marxist explanation of brigandage as a response to social crisis would likewise argue for plebian origins for those involved. Do the facts confirm these views? The execution evidence used by Jouet does not provide details of the social status of those involved. The remissions are much more helpful on the issues of occupation and social standing. Of the 125 people who were involved with the brigands, or who in some way opposed the English, 115 are referred to by occupation. These can be summarised as follows:

Table 1: Summary of social origins

<u>Occupation or class</u>	<u>No. of remissions</u>	<u>% of sample<sup>32</sup></u>
Labourers	50	43
Shop-keepers, craftsmen, merchants etc.	27	23
Clergy	7	6
Esquires ( <i>écuyers</i> )	5	4
<i>Povres hommes</i>	8	7
Crown officials	5	4
Fishhermen	4	3
Women	3	3
Gaolers (helped escapers)	2	2
Gentry	1	1
Others	3	3
Total	<u>115</u>	<u>99</u>

According to these figures, the overwhelming majority of those involved were from the lower classes. We should bear in mind, however, the possibility that the poorer offenders were more likely to be pardoned than the members of the gentry and nobility who opposed the English and who might be able to use their social status to draw support for Charles VII. Nevertheless, the figures do suggest that the majority of those involved were agricultural workers, or craftsmen and small traders. These groups represent the lower levels of society, but not the lowest stratum of the landless dispossessed workers. All but four of the labourers describe themselves specifically as *povre laboureur*. The claim to poverty should not perhaps be taken literally, as it is so common to have the appearance of a formula, especially as the petitioners always seem to strive to gain the sympathy of the authorities, by stressing their poverty or the fact that they had dependents. It is undeniable, however, that the figures suggest activity mainly from below.

Many of the peasants are referred to as *laboureur de bras*. This may imply that they came from the lower sections of the peasantry, the manual workers with little land who might have to sell their labour to the richer peasants. The word *laboureur* usually refers to specifically to a tiller of the soil or a ploughman. They were distinct from the better-off peasant, the *manouvrier*.<sup>33</sup> This latter description is not used by any peasant seeking a remission. Is there any significance in this fact? The *laboureur* would represent one of the sections of society worst affected by the disturbance of war, because they were the group (apart from the completely landless worker) nearest to subsistence level. Their prominence could, of course, simply be because they were the most numerous section of society. Bois calculates that in Aliérmont in Eastern Normandy in the period 1397 to 1424, 48% of the tenants (66 of 135) owned less than 6 hectares, or less than what seems indispensable to maintain a family on land of average fertility.<sup>34</sup> In the social crisis produced by war, these people might be the most likely to take up a life of brigandage because they had the least to lose. On the other hand, Bois believes that it was not actually the poorest people who fled during the crisis years of 1417-22, but rather the better-off peasants who had their livelihoods disrupted by war and brigandage.<sup>35</sup>

Let us look at some of the remissions relating to people who fled English authority through poverty. One Robin Auber fled in 1423, and returned to seek a remission the following year.<sup>36</sup> He was a small trader and worker, 'vivant de marchandise et de labour'<sup>37</sup> who had been

unable to pay his debts to an English captain after some herrings he had bought were stolen by the brigands. To avoid the wrath of his English creditor, he fled to the woods and joined a group of soldiers 'tenans nostre parti contraire'.<sup>38</sup> Jehan Auvré, 'povre homme laboureur' received a remission in 1424.<sup>39</sup> He had refused to pay the *moulte* to his lord, and had his goods seized by the local *prévôt*, whereupon Jehan fled to 'noz ennemis et adverseres' at the garrison of Ste-Suzanne in Maine.<sup>40</sup> Another example of a person fleeing through poverty was Jehan Cauchon, a 'jeune simple homme' who was (so he claimed) forced to supply arms to the brigands, and fled to Brittany after the English seized his goods by way of punishment.<sup>41</sup> These were examples of men of modest means, but of some small property, who were driven into poverty by circumstances, and who later returned to gain remissions.

Most of the supplicants in the remissions represent the 'rank and file' of the brigands, telling us little about the social origins of the leaders, who were perhaps more likely to face execution. However, a group of remissions suggest that at least some of the leaders themselves belonged to the lower classes. In October 1424, a 'povre homme laboureur' named Guillaume Halley gained a remission for having supplied provisions for his son, also called Guillaume Halley, who three years earlier had joined 'noz ennemis et adversaires'.<sup>42</sup> The younger Halley was captured by the English, but escaped and 's'en ala du tout rendre avec les briganz'.<sup>43</sup> Two years later, in March 1426, Guillaume de la Haye, 'povre homme laboureur de bras'<sup>44</sup> was granted a remission for having supplied lances to 'ung brigant nommé Guillaume Hallay'.<sup>45</sup> Young Halley, if this is the same man, was now a brigand of some repute, 'accompagné de deux ou trois de ses complices'.<sup>46</sup> In May of 1426 Guillaume Bouchier povre homme laboureur<sup>47</sup> received a remission after helping 'Guillaume Hallé, brigant, et plusieurs autres de sa Compaignie ...'.<sup>48</sup> Guillaume Hallé appears in the remission of Laurens Hue, 'povre varlet cordouennier'<sup>49</sup> who had also joined his band of 'xv ou xvj compaignons brigands'.<sup>50</sup> Jeannin Beaudouyin, a tanner, also received a remission in May 1426 for his part in this band.<sup>51</sup> The group of *compaignons* probably perished at this time, judging by the flurry of remissions given to its members, suggesting that they were no longer seen as a threat. Bouchier and Beaudouyin were captured in a raid on the abbey of Préaux. Together, these remissions form a 'case history' of a brigand, who, having fled English justice, gathered a small band of armed men around him who engaged

in raids. In this example, both the leader and his companions seem to have been drawn from the peasantry. They might have been ex-soldiers putting their military talents to another use, as was the case for Hallay who had served with a French garrison.

Brigandage seems to have also appealed to the poor or dispossessed, represented in the remissions by those describing themselves as *povre hommes*. In the remission given to Jehan le Sénéchal in 1425,<sup>52</sup> there is a reference to 'pluseurs brigans et autres povres gens de petit estat'.<sup>53</sup> This suggests that many brigands came from the ranks of the poor, and that *brigans* and *povres gens* may have been associated in the minds of the better-off (Jehan le Sénéchal was an esquire). Other marginal groups may have been attracted to resistance. Guillaume Byam, 'soubzaagé et orphelin'<sup>54</sup> was among a group who attacked the residence of the English captain at Pont-Audemer at the time of the battle of Verneuil. Rebellion probably had a greater appeal among the young; of 63 remissions where the petitioners age is mentioned eight related to men under 20 (including one fourteen-year-old), and another 17 to the 20-24 age range. Older people are mentioned as well (there are sixteen over 35) but often are not directly involved, such as Hallay's father.<sup>55</sup>

Before proceeding, it is important to draw a distinction (where possible) between brigands and those who were involved in anti-English activities but were not associated with the brigands. Of our sample of 115 for whom the occupation is known, some 22 do not seem to have been involved in identifiably political actions, for instance those involved in personal quarrels which happened to involve Englishmen, and those who fled to French territory but did not actively oppose the English. This leaves 35 who were brigands or who assisted brigands, and 58 who opposed the English, either through pre-meditated attacks on English soldiers, or by collaborating with the Valois armies. The social break-down of these two groups is shown in Table 2.

These figures suggest two interesting facts. Firstly, the level of peasant involvement is high in both sets of figures. Secondly, there is a slight, but nonetheless striking, skew in favour of the better-off in the second set of figures. Brigandage seems to have been a movement of the lower classes. Higher sections of society appear to have been involved in more 'political' actions. Examples of the latter can be seen in the remissions relating to a plot to surrender Rouen to the French in 1424<sup>56</sup> which involve two masons and a merchant, and in the single

remission for a *gentilhomme*, Colin le Baillant, who had served the French army after the battle of Verneuil.<sup>57</sup> He was, perhaps significantly, only a 'povre gentilz homs'.<sup>58</sup> Possibly a similar case of an impoverished gentleman may be found in the remission for Gilet de Lointren 'povre homme extrait de noble ligné' who had fought in the French armies, and was only saved from execution by a young woman who promised to marry him!<sup>59</sup> Churchmen and *écuyers* were almost exclusively involved in pro-French rather than brigand activities. The exceptions claimed to have been coerced.<sup>60</sup>

Table 2: Social origins of brigands and rebels

Occupation or class	Brigands		Rebels	
	Number	%	Number	%
Laboueurs	19	54	27	45
Shopkeepers etc.	7	20	14	24
Clergy	1	3	5	9
Esquires	1	3	3	5
'Povres hommes'	2	6	3	5
Officials	0	0	2	3
Fishermen	2	6	1	2
Women	2	6	1	2
Gentry	0	0	1	2
Others	1	3	1	2
Total	<u>35</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>99</u>

The different social patterns can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it could be seen as a town-country divide. Gourlay observed that in Upper Normandy the towns were probably not centres of active brigandage, which by its very nature was best carried out in remote rural areas, particularly forests.<sup>61</sup> Plots against the English, however, were very often centred on a town, as these were of great importance strategically. Control of a key town such as Rouen or Harfleur meant control of the surrounding area. Hence sympathisers of Charles VII might plot to turn the town over to the French armies. Remissions can be found relating to such plots in Sées (1421),<sup>62</sup> Rouen (1424),<sup>63</sup> and Etrepagny (1429).<sup>64</sup> These very often involved fairly rich members of the bourgeoisie, such as the masons and the merchant involved in the Rouen plot. The second of the categories in Table 2 (shopkeeper,

craftsmen, merchants) would be more concentrated in the towns. Where these people were involved with the brigands, they are more likely to be small traders; we find a barber surgeon, a merchant, two tanners, an apprentice shoe-maker, a butcher and a brewer. Most of these would have been part of the peasant village community, sharing similar origins with the labourers.

The second difference is one of social circumstance. The richer sections of the population would have little reason to join or co-operate with the brigands. To men of property, the brigands would have appeared as a threat to their wealth, particularly to the merchants, who suffered the risk of brigand attacks on the road. The upper classes would also be more politically aware than the peasantry, as they represented the political nation which took part in meetings of the Estates, in which the peasants were not represented. This would presumably have made them more likely than the peasantry to take up a political stance.

It is still true, however, that a large number of peasants were involved in attacks on the English. The great revolts of the mid-1430s, which unfortunately are not covered by the remissions, seem to have been led by the common people. Basin described those involved as peasants; *agrorum cultores*,<sup>65</sup> *popularium rusticorum*<sup>66</sup> and so on. What is particularly interesting is that there emerged a distrust between the peasantry and the regular French army in the Caux. When the army refused to attack Caudebec, the peasants questioned its commitment to the struggle; 'vous estes traistres, nous y voulons aller.'<sup>67</sup> The army commanders

were jealous of the people for having initiated the undertaking so well, falsely and criminally professing that this would be a great danger for themselves and for the kingdom of France if these populations were fortunate enough to drive the English from the country by their own efforts ...<sup>68</sup>

These divisions led to the defeat and destruction of the peasant bands by the English army. This was not the first time that French forces had put the interests of their class first; during the Jacquerie, Navarrese and royal armies had made common cause against the rebels. The ringing of church bells, which had been used by the *Jacques* to

summon their forces, was banned by Charles V, even when sounding the alarm against English soldiers.<sup>69</sup>

The organisation of the Norman rebels shared this feature with the *Jacques*. In 1434 the English government, worried by the problems caused by brigands and pillages from both armies, began to arm the peasants. A system of community defence was organised under the leadership of *dizainiers*, respected village leaders 'around whom everyone had to meet when the bells sounded, and under whose command they had to march.'<sup>70</sup> In effect, the authorities were reviving a previous practice of peasants arming themselves in self-defence. Wright describes how throughout the Hundred Years War peasants had taken defensive measures against marauding armies, such as fortifying the local church or sounding bells to gather the men of the village. Such organisation could be turned against the government, as happened in the *Jacquerie* and in the Norman peasant risings. It could also provide the basis for brigand leadership; in 1426 we find a *dizainier* Richart Chelloe, 'povre homme laboureur', going over to the side of the brigands, although he did claim to have been coerced.<sup>71</sup> Such claims could, of course, have been made to cover up genuine sympathy for the brigands.

The remissions are useful in covering one outbreak of violence against the English authorities, namely the rising that was sparked-off by reports of a French victory at Verneuil. Nine remissions relate directly to this incident, and give the impression of a spontaneous popular uprising. One remission was for a smith who had fought on the French side<sup>72</sup> and another for the 'povre gentilz homs' who joined the French after the battle.<sup>73</sup> The other seven remissions are for attacks on English soldiers, or their property. Two of these are collective, for the town of Verneuil which opened its gates to the French,<sup>74</sup> and to a group of 38 'simples gens de village' who took up arms against the English.<sup>75</sup> Of the recipients of the individual remissions, two were *laboureurs*,<sup>76</sup> one a poor orphan,<sup>77</sup> one a shoemaker,<sup>78</sup> suggesting once again a popular movement. The exception is a remission for an *écuyer* who was accused of siding with the brigands.<sup>79</sup>

Resistance to authority seems, therefore, to have been a genuine popular movement. Little resistance within Normandy came from the nobility: some Norman nobles gave their loyalty to Henry V after the conquest, and many fought for the English government at Orléans.<sup>80</sup> The choice offered them was to give their loyalty to Henry V or to forfeit their lands. Those who chose to support Charles VII could only



really do so by leaving Normandy. This was the case, for example, of Robert Carrouges, a lord from the Cotentin, who fought for Charles at Verneuil, and had his lands and property confiscated.<sup>81</sup> Forfeit lands could be given to English colonists, or to Frenchmen loyal to the Henrys. Thus Normandy was left with a nobility many of whom had an interest in the continuation of English life.

Similarly, the towns did not offer a great deal of resistance to the English. Henry V made examples of Harfleur and Caen for daring to resist him, after which most towns surrendered, and subsequently remained loyal, or at least acquiescent. The examples of urban resistance in the remissions coincide with the presence of a French army near the town in question. These plots might represent only a minority, who were loyal to Charles VII, or who simply hoped to save the town from a damaging siege by the French army. The towns formed an important element of the Norman Estates, which regularly voted large sums in taxes to the Lancastrian government. For example, the meeting in 1443 saw 21 towns represented, with townsmen constituting a majority of the membership of Estates.<sup>82</sup>

There were no full-scale urban revolts in this period, no equivalent of the *Harelle* of 1382. The towns remained remarkably quiescent. Many benefited from the brief economic recovery enjoyed under Bedford's rule, and English rule opened up the possibility of increased cross-Channel trade. In addition, the towns had been centres of Burgundian sympathy. Supporters of the duke of Burgundy had been involved in the Cabochien movement in Paris in 1413, and the capital remained Burgundian in sympathy. The bourgeoisie feared the disruption of their towns and trade above all else, and were generally happy to accept the rule of anybody who could provide stability.

The clergy were also generally loyal to the English. Some lower clergy refused to accept Lancastrian rule, and it is this section, the ordinary monks and priests, who appear in the remissions records. Some clergy who refused to accept Henry V were deprived of their benefices, and replaced by priests loyal to him. However, the upper echelons of the Church largely accepted English rule.

Therefore resistance appears to have come mainly from the lower classes, although possibly more from men with some land or property than from the absolutely dispossessed. While the gentry, bourgeoisie and higher clergy gave their support to the English, and voted taxes for the government, it was among the peasantry that this rule was most often challenged. Was this a patriotic resistance movement, however?

Were rebels and brigands motivated by patriotism, loyalty to Charles VII, or by the defence of their own immediate economic interests?

### Loyalty or resistance?

Were the brigands patriots? Let us begin by looking at how they were regarded by the English authorities. The term 'brigand' existed before 1415, and was used to describe the bandits and robbers who appeared in Normandy during the civil war before Henry V's invasion. Jouet argues that the term was applied to those who failed to swear allegiance to Henry V following the proclamation of February 1418, and that brigands and partisans were synonymous in the eyes of the authorities; 'le "Brigand", dans la bouche d'Henri, c'est donc celui qui tient le parti de la France'.<sup>83</sup> Descriptions such as 'armignacs et brigans'<sup>84</sup> were often used in official documents, reinforcing this view. The treatment of executed brigands also suggests a political element in their actions. In many executions they were treated as both traitors and bandits; for example, Jouet cites the execution in 1431 of 'deux traîtres, brigans, ennemis et adversaires du Roy' who were 'décapités comme traîtres et les corps pendus au gibet comme larrons'.<sup>85</sup> The brigands were therefore seen by the English authorities as common criminals by virtue of their actions, but as traitors because they resisted the king.

However, an alternative view is equally valid. If, as Jouet suggests, true partisans were associated with bandits in order to discredit them, does this not suggest the existence of large numbers of 'brigands' who were not politically motivated? Furthermore, brigands were treated differently from soldiers - as criminals, not prisoners-of-war. Following an ordinance of 1419, anyone capturing a brigand was to turn him over to the authorities, in exchange for a reward of six *livres tournois*. In order to prevent the brigand resuming his activities, the practice of accepting a ransom for a captured brigand was actively discouraged.<sup>86</sup> The treatment of brigands as traitors does not necessarily mean that they were partisans; under Norman law, which Henry V respected in order to appeal to regional loyalty to him as 'duke', highway robbery was considered an offence against the duke. Thus the description of brigands as 'ennemis et adversaires' may not imply political opposition, although admittedly they are described as enemies of the king, not of the duke.

Does the evidence of the remissions clarify the position? Of the 53 remissions relating directly to brigand activities, 14 describe the brigands in terms that see them as enemies of the king. A number use variations of the expressions 'brigans, ennemis et adverseres de nous'.<sup>87</sup> One remission refers to 'brigans et autres tenans le parti de noz adversaires'.<sup>88</sup> In this example, it is clearly suggested that the brigands were partisans of Charles VII. Similarly, a remission describes people who 'tenoient le parti contaraire à nous, et estoient brigans'.<sup>89</sup> In the remission of Guillaume le Mire, one Roger Christofle is described as having 'se feust ale rendre brigant, adherant, complice et alie des ennemis et adverseres de nostredit feu pere (Henry V) et de nous (Henry VI)'.<sup>90</sup>

However, the majority of these remissions do not use such terms. In most we simply read about 'brigants' or 'brigans', as if this designation were self-explanatory. They were often described as robbers or criminals: 'larrons brigans',<sup>91</sup> 'mauvais et crueulx brigans',<sup>92</sup> 'brigant et larron ... malfaiteur et commiteur des crimes'.<sup>93</sup> Colin le Rat, a noted brigand leader, was described contemptuously as a 'larron et brigant'.<sup>94</sup> Sometimes the two roles overlap, as when they were described as 'larrons brigans, nos ennemis et adverseres'.<sup>95</sup>

Was patriotism a motive for these brigands? Again the evidence is contradictory. Thomas Basin was sceptical about their patriotism, saying that men became brigands 'whether out of cowardice, or out of hatred for the English', for personal gain, or to flee justice.<sup>96</sup> This seems a fair reflection of the remission evidence. Brigands did direct their attacks against the English and officials. A brigand named Arnault Fétot was summarily hanged by an Englishman in 1426 in revenge for having killed an esquire from the English garrison of Château Gaillard.<sup>97</sup> Robin Castellain was implicated in the killing in 1425 of a tax-collector and a sergeant.<sup>98</sup> It is difficult to see any organised resistance movement behind these isolated attacks, however. The attack by a band of brigands on English soldiers fleeing the battle of Verneuil may have been an organised act of resistance, but was just as likely to have been an opportunist attack on a vulnerable target.<sup>99</sup> Many peasants apparently unconnected with the brigands or partisans carried out similar attacks.

Some remissions suggest links between the brigands and French royal armies. A few men who fled the English to 'enemy' territory, or who fought in the French armies, later reappeared as brigands. Guillaume Hallay (or Hallé), a 'capitaine des brigans', served 'noz

ennemis et adversaires' at the garrison of Nogent le Retrou.<sup>100</sup> After being captured by the English, he escaped and joined the *brigands*. Jean de Pavée, who was accused of helping a band of *ennemis* (French soldiers or partisans?), absconded and joined the brigands in the wood of Andely.<sup>101</sup>

Some joined the brigands to escape English rule, or to avoid being brought to justice for various offences. Jehan Robert left his home and joined the brigands to escape his personal enemies and 'aucuns Anglois'.<sup>102</sup> Of course, in cases like this it may have been in the ex-brigand's interest to deny a political motive. Pierre Cauchon claimed to have been forced to help the brigands, and was caught by the English in the act of supplying them with arms. In order to escape justice, he fled to enemy territory.<sup>103</sup> Jehanninot Mestier claimed to have fled to English rule because he had become involved in a quarrel over a woman with members of the English garrison of Eu!<sup>104</sup> However, after having fled to Picardy he reappeared as a member of a band of brigands. There may have been some political motivation behind his band's attack on 'pluseurs marchans anglois',<sup>105</sup> although merchants would of course have offered considerable material rewards for robbery.

So there seems to have been at least a degree of anti-English sentiment in brigand activity. However, most of the actions mentioned in the remissions were directed against non-political targets, including peasants. Many peasants granted remissions claimed to have been forced to help the brigands; we should be sceptical about some of these claims, which might be made to mitigate the petitioner's crimes. Nonetheless, we do gain an impression that peasants or other ordinary people formed the majority of the brigands' victims. For example, a fishmonger who fled English jurisdiction claimed to have done so after his stock had been stolen by the brigands.<sup>106</sup> Colin Michel, a peasant, had his home attacked and robbed by the brigands in 1423, and was too scared of reprisals to inform the authorities immediately.<sup>107</sup> Etienne Fessart, 'povre homme laboureur', was captured and held to ransom, by brigands.<sup>108</sup> A number of similar incidents show the extent to which the brigands preyed upon the local peasant population.

There was, however, anti-English activity which was not apparently linked to the brigands. This took on several forms, such as joining or assisting the armies of Charles VII working against the English within 'occupied' Normandy, or open revolt against the occupier.

In the first of these categories, we find a number of cases where Normans gave assistance to the French armies. Some people took the opportunity to desert to Charles VII when it arose, such as those who went over to the French side at or around the time of the battle of Verneuil. As we have seen, brigandage and anti-English activity seem to have increased around the time of French military incursions: high points occur in 1424 (Verneuil), 1429-30 (the aftermath of the siege of Orléans and French advances in the Seine Valley) and 1436 (the Caux rising and French advances into Upper Normandy). If any Normans living under English rule sympathised with Charles VII, they would be more likely to show it at times of French military strength.

Two remissions throw light on one case of defection. Jehan de Monnier received a remission in November 1424 for helping to sell the goods of his lord, Robert de Carrouges, who had gone over to the French side.<sup>109</sup> Carrouges had been, in the words of Le Cacheux, 'un des premiers siegneurs normands qui se rallièrent au parti anglais.'<sup>110</sup> He defected to the cause of Charles VII in 1424, and had his property confiscated in June of that year in favour of an English captain. He clearly wanted to salvage some of his livelihood by sending his clerk, le Monnier, to sell his goods before the English could enjoy their full benefit. Carrouges' actions suggest that he, like many others, accepted Henry V's rule when the English gained control of Normandy, but showed his loyalty to the Valois cause when French armies reappeared in the Duchy.

When a lord changed sides, many of his tenants and servants might do likewise out of loyalty to him rather than to either king. Thus we find that a farrier Jehan Lebret, 'povre homme ouvrier', served his master, the same Robert de Carrouges, at the battle of Verneuil, where Carrouges was killed.<sup>111</sup> Lebret would understandably play down any partisan sympathies he may have had when seeking a remission, but it is nonetheless interesting to read the reasons he gave for his actions. He claimed to have followed Carrouges without knowing that the latter planned to join the French army. Carrouges had said that 'il me esconvient tres bref aler ou pais de Costentin veoir mes hommes et savoir comme mes terres ... sont gouvernées',<sup>112</sup> and needed Lebret to shoe his horses. The farrier went 'pour doubte d'encourir son (Carrouges's) indignation'<sup>113</sup> rather than out of sympathy for the Valois cause. After the English victory at Verneuil, Lebret returned to seek a remission.

Others who joined the French armies claimed to have been forced to do so.<sup>114</sup> These examples are reminiscent of similar cases where brigands coerced people into assisting them. In some instances, in fact, there does not seem to have been a great deal of difference between the actions of soldiers and those of brigands. Pierre Avenal, a labourer, received a remission in 1426 for his part in assisting some French soldiers from the garrison of La Ferté Bernard who operated in the woods of St-Evrault.<sup>115</sup> Their behaviour in haunting the forest and attacking the petitioner's home was similar to that of brigands.

What form did resistance to the English occupation in Normandy take? As we have seen, anti-English feeling seems to have played at least a part in the activities of the brigands. These, although probably not synonymous with partisans, could be seen as embodying peasant resistance of a sort. However, they tended to operate on the edges of society, in the forests and wild places, and did not form an integral part of peasant society. Goulay found that brigandage tended to flourish in marginal areas, often where authority was weak.<sup>116</sup> More economically advanced areas, such as the Seine Valley, where the peasant population was more concentrated and comparatively prosperous, did not have a high level of brigandage.<sup>117</sup> This is not to say, however, that the brigands were entirely separate from the community; there are some examples of peasants who assisted relatives among the brigands, as we have seen in the case of Hallay, and of Colin le Rat, who received aid from an uncle.<sup>118</sup> The brigand was linked to, but operated outside, peasant society. The brigands should perhaps be seen as 'social bandits' who were 'small groups of men living on the margins of peasant society, and whose activities are considered criminal by the prevailing official power-structure and value-system, but not (or not without strong qualifications) by the peasantry'.<sup>119</sup>

Among the peasant population itself, self-defence seems to have been the major motive for conflict with the English. Many examples of killings of Englishmen by peasants occurred when the latter came under attack, usually by *pillards* from the English army. In the remissions, out of 26 offences involving an attack on an Englishman or members of the English garrisons, the petitioner claimed to have been acting in self-defence on 15 occasions. To take but one example, Jouhan Daboville, *laboureur*, received a remission for having killed an Englishman who attacked his home. He was assisted in this action by three other villagers.<sup>120</sup> It was often the case that small groups of peasants co-operated in this way in self-defence, as when the people of

Berjou took up arms against a band of pillagers, 'gens d'armes ... Anglois et autres ...',<sup>121</sup> from the army of the earl of Warwick.

It is debatable whether such actions could be considered 'patriotic' acts of resistance. It would probably be more accurate to describe them as defensive acts, protecting the peasant community against those, English or otherwise, who threatened it - as we have just seen, pillagers could be 'anglois et autres.' Jehan le Bouchier of Bernouville in south-east Normandy fought in the Burgundian army, and later took part in a series of robberies in the company of a group of English pillagers.<sup>122</sup> Jehan le Monnier, a peasant from the Pays de Caux joined a band of pillagers who (he claimed) had taken him prisoner.<sup>123</sup> Martin Toutain, a butcher from Verneuil took part in a robbery with an English yeoman.<sup>124</sup> These and other examples show that there was not a clear division between a patriotic French population and the hated foreign occupier.

It has to be understood that pillage was in no way an element of government policy, but was actually opposed and punished by the English authorities. Under Bedford's regency, strenuous efforts were made to prevent indiscipline. A 'complaints-procedure' was established, whereby natives could seek justice if they had been molested by English soldiers, and captains were empowered to punish those responsible.<sup>125</sup> Ordinances were issued in December 1423 and September 1428 with the aim of removing the temptation of pillage by ensuring that soldiers received regular wages. As the English position in France deteriorated following the siege of Orléans in 1429, problems of indiscipline increased as the administration's resources were stretched by the demands of war. However, the government continued its efforts to limit the problem of pillage. A notable *pillard* leader, Venables, was executed in 1434, demonstrating that English justice was even-handed.

In short, it seems that resistance in the countryside, when it occurred, mainly took the form of association with brigands or French men-at-arms, or of acts of self-defence against attacks by pillagers - including fellow Frenchmen. In some cases, however, the proximity of French armies could act as a catalyst for revolt. The number of incidents at the time of the battle of Verneuil are an example of this. There is some evidence of pro-Valois sentiment in these incidents. The people of Verneuil opened their town's gates to the French armies, and a number of remissions relate to individuals, or small groups, who attacked English soldiers. It is, of course, possible that robbery may



have been the motive for such attack; in one case, an English esquire was involved in an attack on English fugitives.<sup>126</sup> He claimed to have been forced to do so by a group of brigands, suggesting that the patriotism of the latter did not extend to excluding the English from some of their activities. The turmoil of battles and sieges provided an excellent opportunity for robbery, especially of defeated and demoralised soldiers. Although the attacks on individual soldiers at Verneuil were all against Englishmen (suggesting a patriotic motive), theft was also an element in them. A remission was issued in 1433 to Jehan Hauce, who had committed acts of brigandage during the siege of Louviers.<sup>127</sup> He could hardly have been a French partisan, as he was a 'natif du pays de Hollande'<sup>128</sup> who had served in the English army.

To summarise, patriotism played a part, but only a relatively minor one, in peasant resistance. Self-defence of the peasant community was the motivation behind most acts of resistance, which could be directed against pillagers of either army, or even against native brigands, as much as against the English authorities. Robbery, rather than patriotism, was the main factor in brigand raids. Where conflicts with the English did occur, it was often motivated by self-defence or a personal dispute.

Should we be surprised to find patriotism taking such a minor position? There is certainly evidence of tension between the native population and the English soldiery. Jehan de Riant, a smith, received a remission after killing an Englishman in a fight.<sup>129</sup> The Englishman had insulted him, saying 'parle anglois; tu scez bien parler anglois'.<sup>130</sup> Such incidents, and the Englishman's use of the diminutive *tu* toward the Frenchman, point to such a tension. This would be a natural product of the problems inherent in the presence of a foreign army for a long period of time. Anti-soldier feeling could be very powerful among the peasantry, even where the soldiers concerned were not from a foreign country. For instance, the *Jacquerie* began with attacks on soldiers.<sup>131</sup> The English authorities attempted to reduce such tensions, for example by not using a system of forced billeting. Nevertheless, the presence of the army, and the problem of pillage, created problems and upset the equilibrium of the peasant community. Occasionally, French people came into conflict with English soldiers by voicing anti-English sentiments, as in the example of Robin le Peletier, who was killed by an Englishman who heard him insult the duke of Bedford.<sup>132</sup>

However, there were also many instances of French co-operation with the English authorities. One remission relates to an incident



during an expedition mounted by the villagers of Dangu and Vesly against 'noz adversaires,' a band of French soldiers who had stolen the people's horses and cattle.<sup>133</sup> For many, personal safety came before patriotism; in 1427, one Estienne Drouyn helped a group of English pillagers rob his neighbour in revenge for the latter having denounced him to the French for collaboration.<sup>134</sup> Such personal quarrels could play as great a role as considerations of loyalty in deciding which side a person might choose.

In effect, there was not a clear and absolute French-English divide. Those who fled Normandy during the conquest were given the opportunity to return by the Caen ordinance of 1423, whereby the Bedford government offered them pardons. The policy of the English government was, in fact, to respect local rights and customs. The principle of respect for local laws was to be extended to the kingdom as a whole; in the treaty of Troyes in 1420, Henry V was made heir to Charles VI, and promised to rule France as a separate kingdom under its own laws. In Normandy, Lancastrian rule appealed to regional identity. This appeal could potentially be very powerful, especially as Henry, a Plantagenet, could claim to be the legitimate heir of Rollo. Henry V posed as duke of Normandy in 1419 and, according to the *Brut*, was welcomed by the local inhabitants.<sup>135</sup> Normandy was treated to some degree as a separate entity; in the treaty of Troyes, it was to be held separately from France by Henry, until he or his heirs came to the throne. The Norman Estates were revived and used by the English administration, as part of an attempt to make the wars self-financing by placing more of the tax-burden onto the shoulders of the Norman people.

This attempted self-sufficiency of defence extended to the use of the native population in arms. We have already seen how the peasantry was organised against brigands and pillagers following an ordinance of January 1434. The local population also contributed to the English armies, as in the example of the mounted 'anglois et normans', one of whose number attacked Richart des Hayes in 1426.<sup>136</sup> The English were, however, careful at times to limit the number of Frenchmen in their armies. Feudal levies and urban militias took part in English campaigns, although they generally formed a small minority. The towns contributed to their own defence through the payment of *guet* and *garde*.<sup>137</sup>

The picture we perceive is therefore one of considerable loyalty to, or at least toleration of, English rule, especially during the relatively

peaceful and prosperous 1420s. Basin described how in the early years of Bedford's rule, 'Normans and French of that (English-controlled) part of the kingdom had a great affection for him'.<sup>138</sup> These reserves of loyalty toward the English government dissipated as taxation and pillage increased the burden of occupation on the peasantry, until they were prepared to revolt. This raises a further question; to what extent were economic factors a cause of revolt?

The period of war and occupation placed a heavy burden on an economy that was barely recovering from the disasters of plague and war in the Fourteenth century. The severe reduction of the population following the Black Death had also created the potential for great social changes and class struggles as the numerically much reduced peasantry became wealthier and more assertive. Perhaps the emergence of the brigands, and the revolt in the Caux should be seen as incidents of struggle sparked off by the impact of war and taxation, similar to the Jacquerie of 1358 and the English revolt of 1381.

The early impact of war on its resumption was severe. The years 1415 and 1417-19 saw Henry V wage a war of conquest. The war seems to have left Normandy in a state of some desolation, especially in the countryside. Bois calculates that the population in 1422-3 was barely half that of 1400.<sup>139</sup> Basin (admittedly a rather distant and over-dramatic witness) described a countryside 'absolutely deserted, uncultivated, devoid of inhabitants, covered with brambles and briars'.<sup>140</sup> This situation was made worse by the failure of the harvests of 1420 and 1421, and inflation caused by the lack of bullion and subsequent debasements. Pierre Cochon recorded the social effects; 'ceux qui vouloient estres riches vindres povres, et les povres riches'.<sup>141</sup> It seems highly probable that the phenomenon of the brigands was a product of this grave crisis.

There was some recovery with the improvement in the harvests from 1422 onwards, and with the English victory at Verneuil in 1424 which removed the 'front line' to the Loire. The size of the English garrisons halved between 1422-3 and 1428-9.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, the burden of taxation fell from the 400,000 *livres tournois* voted in 1421 to a mere 120,000 in 1426.<sup>143</sup> There is also evidence of an increase in trade and of a return to Normandy, reflected in the large numbers of remissions issued in these years. However, what Bois describes as a 'difficult recovery'<sup>144</sup> faltered toward the end of the decade. The victories of Jeanne d'Arc brought new Valois incursions into Normandy. Inflation and taxation began to bite again, and commerce declined.

Taxation rose to over 400,000 *livres tournois* once more in 1431.<sup>145</sup> In addition, the population suffered pillage as military discipline declined and the number of garrison troops increased.

This new economic crisis forms the background to the risings of the mid-1430s, as high taxation and the constant problem of pillage and banditry pushed the peasantry to revolt. Taxation was often a catalyst for revolt, and the *taille* of 1431 probably fell most heavily upon the peasantry.<sup>146</sup> The rising in the grain-producing Caux region in turn hit the Norman economy, as did the entry of French troops into the area, and the English reaction to the rising. Bois calls the consequent situation 'Hiroshima in Normandy'.<sup>147</sup>

The background against which this vast social crisis unfolded was once again that of a rural economy under the burden of taxation. The occupying power met increased resistance with force, consequently increasing taxation to finance it ... When taxes no longer came in ... the whole political and military system was in peril, and pillage proper replaced legal pillage.

## Conclusion

The incidence of brigandage and popular revolt should not be seen primarily as a patriotic resistance movement. While it is true that there was an element of anti-English feeling in the activities of brigands, as in the peasant revolts, this does not appear to have been the major factor. Nor was there any element of messianism or religion in these movements; there is no reference to religious motives, or to support for Jeanne d'Arc in the evidence provided by the remissions. Where antipathy to the English occurred, it seems to have been more on the level of resentment at outsiders in the peasant community, and at the disruption which accompanied the presence of a standing army.

There is, however, a correlation between popular resistance and economic difficulties. This is not always a direct correlation; brigandage could and did occur in periods of relative prosperity, such as the mid-1420s when increased movement of goods and merchants offered rich pickings for would-be robbers. However, economic disruption and social disruption tended to go together, so that we find that brigandage was at its peak at times of crisis, particularly military

crisis, such as the years of conquest, the Verneuil campaign, and the years during and immediately after the Caux rising. The initial loyalty felt for Bedford among the population declined with the increased economic burden that the occupation placed upon them, particularly the rise in taxation and in the incidence of pillage.

The movements described drew most of their support from the common people. It would appear from the evidence of the remissions that this support came primarily from the people with a small stake in society, namely small traders, craftsmen of low status or artisans, and the poorer peasantry. These were not the absolutely poorest sections, but those with a small amount of property which was put at risk by the uncertainties of war. The heads of the peasant communities, the *dizainiers*, formed the leadership of the rebels in the Caux, while the brigands seem to have been led by former soldiers of peasant origins. In both cases, the movements seem to have had the character of spontaneous activities of the lower classes.

#### NOTES

\*This article is based upon research carried out in the preparation of my dissertation for the MA in Medieval Studies in the Graduate Centre in 1990.

<sup>1</sup> C.T. Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy 1415-1450. The History of a Medieval Occupation* (Oxford 1983), p.231.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in B.J.H. Rowe, 'John Duke of Bedford and the Norman "Brigands"', *EHR*, 47 (1932), 584.

<sup>3</sup> M.L. Pusieux, 'Des Insurrections Populaires en Normandie pendant l'occupation Anglaise au XVe siècle', *Memoires de la société des antiquaires de Normandie*, 2<sup>e</sup> série, ix (1851), 138.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy*, p.309.

<sup>5</sup> See Rowe, 'John Duke of Bedford'.

<sup>6</sup> N.A.R. Wright, "'Pillagers" and "brigands" in the Hundred Years War', *Journal of Medieval History*, 9, (1983), 20.

<sup>7</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, 'Social Banditry' in H.A. Landsberger (ed.), *Rural Protest: Peasant movements and social change* (London, 1974).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. pp.142-8.

<sup>9</sup> T. Basin, *Histoire de Charles VII*, ed. C. Samaran, i (Paris 1933), p.115.

<sup>10</sup> N.A.R. Wright, "Pillagers" and "brigands", 20.

- 11 Basin, i, p.199.
- 12 *Actes de la Chancellerie d'Henri VI, concernant la Normandie sous la domination anglaise (1422-1435)*, ed. P. Le Cacheux, I (Paris-Rouen 1907-8), CXXVIII, pp.328-30.
- 13 Basin's chronicle is not strictly contemporary as it was written during the reign of Louis XI. He lived outside Normandy during the events described. Cochon was closer to these events, but is less informative about the brigands.
- 14 R. Jouet, *La Résistance à l'occupation anglaise en Basse-Normandie (1418-1450)* (Caen 1969).
- 15 D. Goulay, 'La Résistance à l'occupant anglais en Haute-Normandie (1435-44)', *Annales de Normandie*, 36<sup>e</sup> année (1986), no.1, 37-55; No.2, 91-104.
- 16 *Actes de la Chancellerie*, I (items I - CLVIII) and II (items CLIX - CCXLVI).
- 17 N.A.R. Wright, "'Pillagers" and "brigands"', 15-24. Similar evidence was used by Wright for the fourteenth century.
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- 21 e.g. *Actes*, CXXII.
- 22 *Actes*, XLI.
- 23 *Actes*, L, LIX, LX, LXI, LXIII, LXIV, LXVII..
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- 28 Basin, i, p.107.
- 29 *Ibid.*, ii, p.53.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p.57.
- 31 L. Puiseux, 'Des Insurrections populaires en Normandie, 139-44.
- 32 In this table figures are rounded to nearest whole number and thus the total does not equal 100.
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- 34 *Ibid.*, p.149.
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- 38 *Actes*, XLIX.
- 39 *Actes*, LXVI.
- 40 *Actes*, LXVI.
- 41 *Actes*, XXIX.
- 42 *Actes*, LI.
- 43 *Actes*, LI.
- 44 *Actes*, LI.
- 45 *Actes*, CXX.
- 46 *Actes*, CXX.
- 47 *Actes*, CXXVII.
- 48 *Actes*, CXXVII.
- 49 *Actes*, CXXXI.
- 50 *Actes*, CXXXI.
- 51 *Actes*, CXXXIII.
- 52 *Actes*, LXXII.
- 53 *Actes*, LXXII.
- 54 *Actes*, XXXVIII.,.
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- 80 Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy*, p.217.
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- 82 A.E. Curry, 'Towns at War: relations between the towns of Normandy and their English rulers, 1417-1450', in *Towns and Townspeople in the fifteenth century*, ed. J.A.F. Thomson, (Gloucester 1988).
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- 94 *Actes*, CXXV.
- 95 *Actes*, CXVII.
- 96 Basin, i, p.107.
- 97 *Actes*, CXVII.
- 98 *Actes*, CXLV.
- 99 *Actes*, LXXII.
- 100 *Actes*, LI.
- 101 *Actes*, LVIII.
- 102 *Actes*, XXXIX.
- 103 *Actes*, XXIX.
- 104 *Actes*, CCI\*.
- 105 *Actes*, CCI.

- 106 *Actes*, XLIX.
- 107 *Actes*, IV.
- 108 *Actes*, XI.
- 109 *Actes*, LXIV.
- 110 *Actes*, LXIV.
- 111 *Actes*, LXVII.
- 112 *Actes*, LXVII.
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- 117 *Ibid.*, 42-3.
- 118 *Actes*, I, LXXV.
- 119 Hobsbawm, 'Social Banditry', p.143.
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- 135 Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy*, p.122.
- 136 *Actes*, CXXXIX.
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- 140 Basin, i, p.87.



<sup>141</sup> P.Cochon, *Chronique Normande*, in *Chronique de la Pucelle*, ed M.Vallet de Viriville (Paris 1859, reprinted Geneva 1976), p.443.

<sup>142</sup> A.E. Curry, 'Military organisation in Lancastrian Normandy, 1422-1450', (unpublished PhD. CNAA - Teesside Polytechnic, 1985), vol I, p.202.

<sup>143</sup> See Rowe, 'Estates of Normandy'.

<sup>144</sup> Bois, p.327 and following.

<sup>145</sup> Rowe, 'Estates'.

<sup>146</sup> See A.E. Curry, 'The impact of war and occupation on urban life in Normandy, 1417-1450', *French History*, I, no. 2 (1987).

<sup>147</sup> Bois, pp.335 and following.

**Figure 1: Executions and Remissions connected with brigandage or resistance**

